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ABSTRACT

Prepared by the State of Idaho's Right to Read program, this handbook lists suggestions to help parents discover their child's uniqueness and be her or his first teacher. The suggestions involve the provision of experiences in the community and at home, such as helping children master motor tasks through running, tossing, and clapping; listening to the child's talking; helping children learn and discover in such locales as farms, parks, and grocery stores; talking about colors and size differences; providing practice in decision-making; providing art activities; and reading books aloud together. Lists of recommended books for children and for parents are included. (CC)

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YOUR CHILD GROWS THROUGH DISCOVERY

A Handbook for Parents

Right to Read
State of Idaho
Department of Education
Len B. Jordan Building
Boise, Idaho 83720

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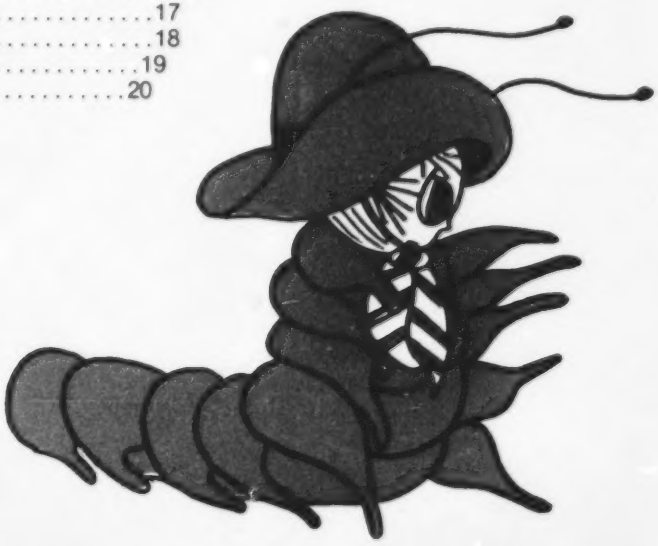


Discover Your Child's Uniqueness

Every child is different. All children learn different skills at different times and mature at different rates. Each child grows through his or her own experiences. If your child doesn't develop at the same rate as your neighbor's child or a brother or sister, do not become alarmed. Your child is an individual.

Children need to feel loved, wanted and accepted. Your child needs experiences which bolster self-confidence and self-respect. If your child has self-confidence, he or she will be able to move ahead, explore, try new things, and attempt to solve everyday problems. It is important to know that hard problems can be dealt with even though they take a long time to solve. Children who doubt themselves may be frightened to meet the demands of growing up.

A word of caution; there is a difference between encouragement and pressure. Each child needs to feel success. **Praise his or her efforts** and avoid comparing him or her with other children.

Help your child to develop an interest and curiosity for learning. Take the time to listen and answer questions. Turn everyday activities into broadening, learning experiences.

Guard your child's health:

Periodic health examinations

Hearing examinations if your child does not respond to voice or sounds by six months or is not speaking at 2½-3 years

Complete examination before starting school

Plenty of rest each night; at least eight hours are needed for healthy bodies and minds

Discovery In The Community

Opportunities to learn are all around your children. As you help them observe and experience, ask lots of questions and let them do the same.

In The Fields And Woods

Taste the wild huckleberries.
"Are they sweet or sour?"

Feel the bark of trees.
"Is it rough or smooth?"

Look at the weeds and wildflowers.
"How are they different or alike?"

At The Farm

Notice the farm animals.

"What do they eat?"
"What noise do they make?"
"Can you imitate them?"

"What can you smell, hear or feel?"
"What would it be like to be a flower growing or a blade of grass that is stomped on?"

In The Park

Throw a hula hoop or other round object to an area.

Inspect closely and describe what you see.

At The Library

Meet the librarian.

Find out what special services (story hours, films, etc.) are available.

Libraries have records, toys, paintings, posters and many things to check out besides books.

Start letting your children select books when they are very young.

Don't panic if they choose the same type of book or subject over and over.

At The Grocery Store

Ask: "How is that can of beans different from this one?"

Cut a box front or magazine ad and have your child find the matching product.

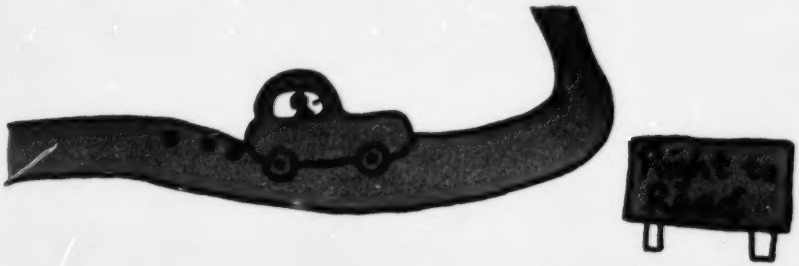
Help make a grocery list.

On A Trip

If a child follows a map, he or she won't ask every 30 minutes, "Are we there yet?"

Take along a cigar box with felt on the lid that contains felt backed objects and felt figures.

Play the alphabet game with road signs and billboards.



Discovery In The Home

Independence

A child needs to feel independent, worthy and self-reliant. To develop these qualities give him or her small tasks and responsibilities in which success can be achieved.

Make sure the task is completed by the child.

button own coat
zip own zipper
tie own shoes
put away toys
hang up clothes

Muscles And Movement

Motor control is achieved by your child as he or she grows. Muscles develop at different times. Large muscles develop before small ones. Be sure your child has many opportunities to use both. Toys are excellent for developing muscle skills. Let children respond to music. Rhythm and self-expression through body movement can help to develop individuality.

Large Motor Tasks

Can your child perform large motor tasks such as walking on a balance beam, catching, kicking and throwing a large ball, and playing with large blocks and boxes? If not, provide opportunities for:

Running, jumping, hopping, skipping and galloping

Ball rolling, bouncing, catching, dropping or tossing in a bucket (For very small children use a small, soft pillow or sponge.)

Bean bag toss

Clapping and tapping to slow and fast rhythms

Imitating—"This is the way we rake the leaves."

Dressing Up — With old shoes, hats, dresses, pants, handbags and uniforms

Small Motor Tasks

Can your child perform small motor tasks such as tracing, folding paper, coloring, cutting, drawing. If not, provide opportunities for:

Stringing large beads, buttons, macaroni, snipped soda straws

Drawing different designs such as dots, curved lines, squares, triangles, circles, wiggly lines, hearts and straight lines

Cutting pictures from old magazines, paper chains and pasting collages

Learning the proper use of tools such as hammers, saws, and screwdrivers (Be sure to provide a safe place to practice.)

Folding paper hats from newspapers

Opening and closing of lids (Collect clean, empty, unbreakable containers with lids that unscrew, lift up or unfold.)

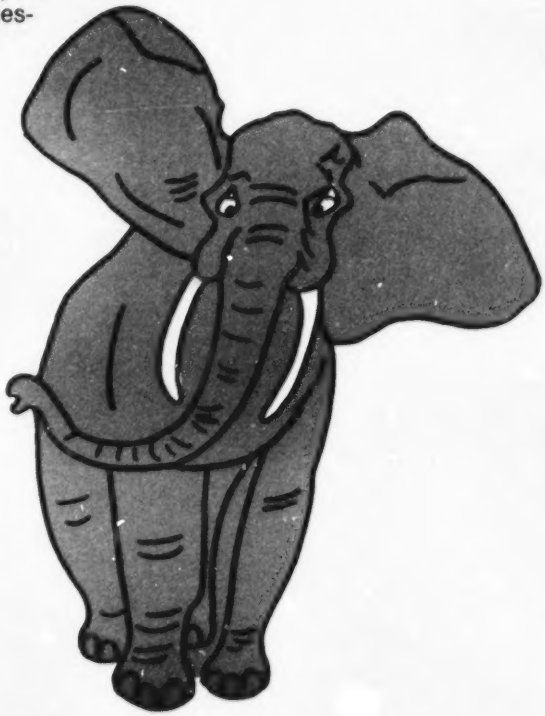
You Can Encourage Your Child To Imitate Animals

Listening

Listening to your child gives him or her a feeling of belonging. Something you don't think is worthwhile might really be important to your child.

Rate Yourself As A Listener

1. When your child is talking to you, do you stop what you are doing to listen?
2. When explaining something that happened, do you let your child finish without interrupting?
3. When you don't understand what your child is talking about, do you ask questions?
4. Do you ask your child to tell you what he or she wants instead of just pointing?
5. Do you let your child have a chance to tell things to the family at mealtime?



Talking

Language development begins at birth. Infants learn to make their first sounds through imitation. Always speak clearly, in complete sentences, without baby talk. Encourage and help your child to understand how to express himself or herself.

Talk About Differences

up and down
beside and between
left and right
over and under
before and after
big and little
large and small

Talk About Colors

"This is a red shirt."
"Go get your green mittens."
"Put on your blue levis."

Story Telling

Tell a story together. Have the child give one idea and you give the next. Start a story and let your child finish it. Then, let him or her start one and you finish. Let your child guess what will happen next. Make up different endings for familiar stories. Have your child tell a story about pictures or ads. Use snapshots.

Records

Provide stories for listening,
nursery rhymes to memorize,
songs for singing,
opportunities for the repetition your children enjoy.

Singing games may also help children develop the vocabulary and rhyming skills necessary for success in beginning reading.

Following Directions

Following directions can be an enjoyable game if there are several children involved and the directions become increasingly difficult but not frustrating.

1. "Pick up your jacket."
2. "Pick up your jacket. Hang it on a hook."

Word Games And Riddles

Simple word games and riddles can be played.

"What has four legs and buries a bone?"

Fill in the rhyming word of nursery rhymes.
Jack and Jill
Went up the_____.

Decision Making

In order to become a self-reliant adult, a child needs practice in decision making. There are choices even a toddler can make. We must, however, respect his or her choice, and help the child learn that, once the decision is made, the consequences must be accepted.

"Chocolate, strawberry or peppermint ice cream?"
"Red or blue shirt to wear today?"
"Games to play?"

Fun With Art

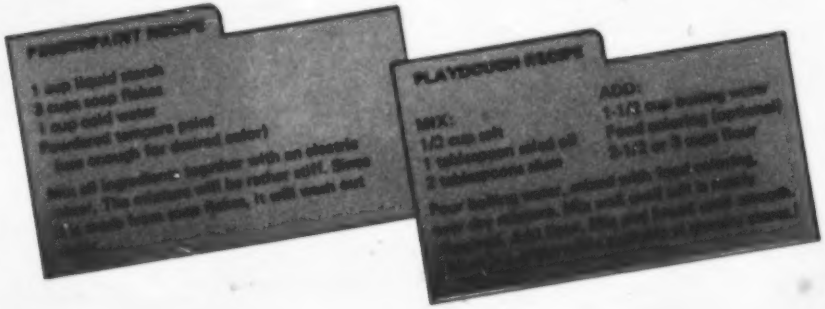
A variety of art activities helps children develop small hand muscles and gives them a chance to exercise their creativity. Children may enjoy using these art supplies:

1. Scissors and paste - (Pictures can be drawn and pasted.)
2. Wallpaper - (Free sample books from paint stores)
3. Large crayons - (Vary texture by using sideways)
4. Large brushes - (Easier for small hands and allows for free movement. Can be used with water to make sidewalk pictures.)
5. Tempera paints - (Powdered or liquid - at craft stores)
6. Large paper - (Ends of newsprint rolls are free from newspapers. Boxes and paper bags are fun to draw on.)
7. Playdough - (Can be used to mold shapes, designs or objects)
8. Fingerpaints - (Designs can be made and remade on a cookie sheet.)

Your old shirts can be used as smocks!

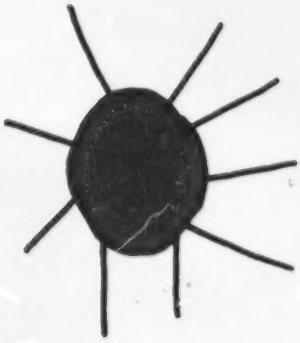
Lots of newspapers on tables and floors will help clean-up.

A place is needed for your child to keep his or her "treasures." This could be a special bulletin board and a treasure box or shelves in a corner of a room. Perhaps that special picture could be displayed on the front of the refrigerator.



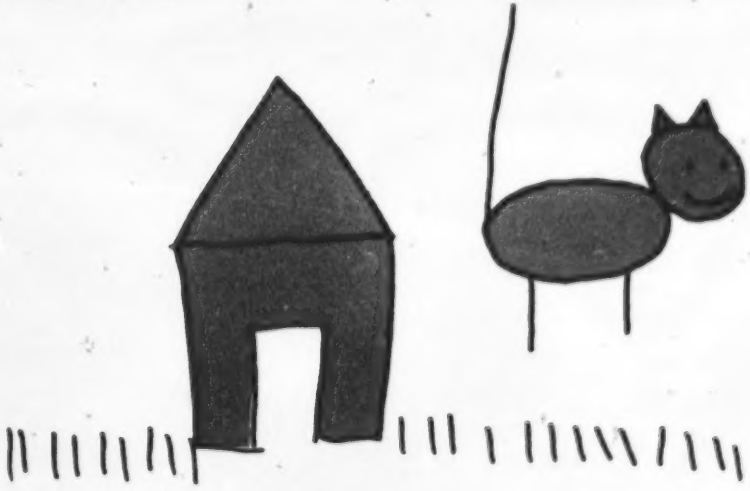
Your Child's Art

One thing that is normal for the early stages of development is the lack of proportion and detail in drawing. Your child might put a big head on a little boy and the ears may be bigger than the head. The people could be lying flat and you might be able to see through the walls of a house.



The dogs could have two legs and appear to be flying. There might be orange grass or a purple cow because orange or purple are favorite colors.

So please don't laugh or tell what is wrong with the picture. When your child presents it to you, take time to sit down for just a minute and let him or her tell you about it.



Numbers

Help your child learn the sequence of numbers. Have him or her count.

"How many spoons do we need to set the table?"

"How many owls do you see?"

Fingers and toes are built-in counters.

Old calendars and playing cards teach your child what numbers come after what.

Other Activities For Your Child

Putting puzzles together

Making designs with pegs on pegboards

Helping with household chores such as setting the table or raking the lawn

Writing or drawing on a chalkboard

Counting or sorting beads or beans (Egg cartons are good for storing objects and for sorting by color or shape.)

Using such things as macaroni, buttons, leaves, acorns and cloth for making pictures and designs

Reading

Subscribe to books, magazines and newspapers. Show that reading is important in your daily living. Three months old is not too early for your child to begin hearing stories. Poetry and nursery rhymes are good to read aloud.

Read Alouds

Nobody Asked Me If I Wanted A Baby Sister. Martha Alexander. How Oliver learns to cope with a new sister.

Leo, The Latebloomer. Robert Kraus. Leo, a slow learner, proves his mother's faith in him is well deserved.

Now We Are Six. A. A. Milne. Poems by the author of **Winnie, The Pooh.**

Hailstones and Halibut Bones, Mary O'Neill. Fun poetry about colors.

The Mitten, Alvin Tressalt. A boy's mitten becomes an animal shelter.

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney. Judith Viorst. The death of a cat handled frankly and beautifully.

The Velveteen Rabbit, Marjorie Williams. The velveteen rabbit learns that love makes you real.

If your child is not interested in beginning to read before school, do not pressure him or her into reading. A child forced into trying to read too early may fail and lose the self-confidence needed for reading success.

Help your child stick to some type of daily schedule or routine for work at home, television watching, read-aloud time, etc.

Build Some Memories With Your Children

DAILY READING CAN ASSURE YOUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE INDEPENDENT READING.

Read To Them

This is a nostaigic theme. Many people may remember the warmth and closeness that came out of reading sessions with their parents, helping to bind their families together.

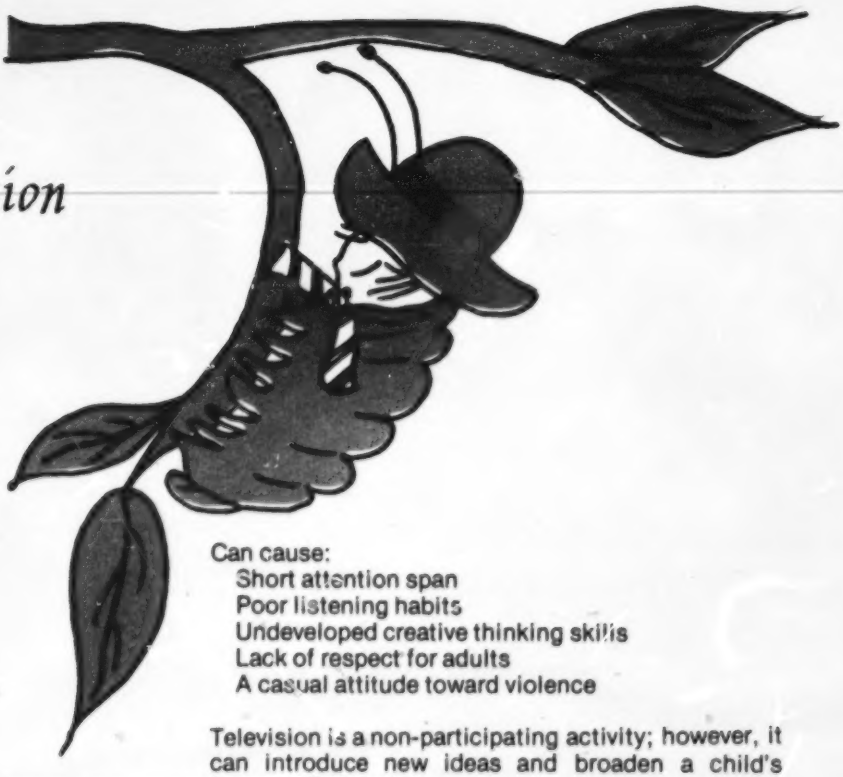
We want to emphasize the influence parents can have in establishing good reading habits in their children. You parents are the schools' partners and we need you!

Research shows that parents have a greater influence on the child's life than anyone else. Parents are the first teachers of children, and we are asking for your help. Reading is basic to success in school and life, and children who come from homes where reading and good conversation are stressed start school with an advantage.

Set aside a special time each day to read to your children. No matter how bad the day is, parent and child can look forward to a cozy, reassuring ten or fifteen minutes.

Adapted from a letter to Parents and Educators from Dr. Roy Truby, Idaho State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Television



Can cause:

- Short attention span
- Poor listening habits
- Undeveloped creative thinking skills
- Lack of respect for adults
- A casual attitude toward violence

Television is a non-participating activity; however, it can introduce new ideas and broaden a child's interest IF parents:

- Limit and monitor TV watching
- Discuss the shows with children
- Ask: "Why did that happen?"
  "How could the story have ended differently?"
  "What could you have done if you had been in the show?"
  "What did you like (dislike)?"

Books For Children

Wordless Picture Books

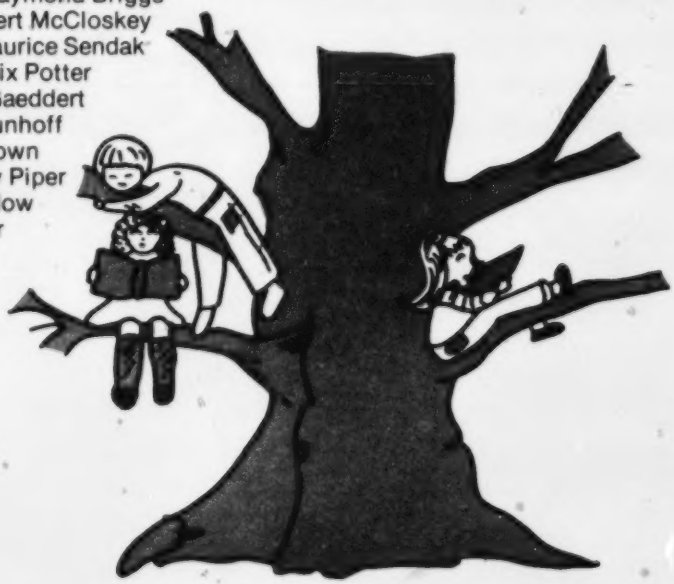
Do You Want to Be My Friend? Eric Carle
The Lazy Dog, John Hamberger
There's a Nightmare in My Closet, Mercer Mayer
Frog Goes to Dinner, Mercer Mayer

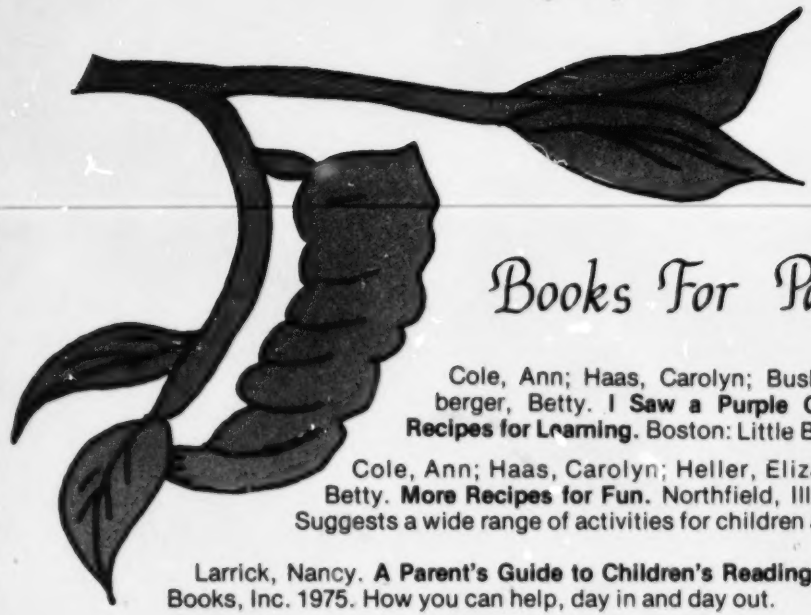
Beginning to Read Books

Bears on Wheels, Stanley Berenstain
Are You My Mother? P. D. Eastman
The Cat in the Hat, Theodor Geisel
Nobody Listens to Andrew, Elizabeth Guilfoile
Ten Apples Up on Top, Theo LeSteig
Put Me in the Zoo, Robert Lopshire
Little Bear and Other Titles, Else Minarik

Picture Books

Richard Scarry's Cars and Trucks and Things That Go, Richard Scarry
Bedtime for Francis, Bread and Jam for Francis, R. Hoban
Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel, Virginia Lee Burton
What Do You Do With a Kangaroo, Mercer Mayer
May I Bring a Friend?, Beatrice de Regniers
The Mother Goose Treasury, Raymond Briggs
Make Way For Ducklings, Robert McCloskey
Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak
The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Beatrix Potter
Noisy Nancy Norris, LouAnn Gaeddert
The Story of Babar, Jean deBrunhoff
Goodnight Moon, Margaret Brown
Little Engine that Could, Watty Piper
Let's Draw Animals, Ann Davidow
Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waber
Madeline, Ludwig Bemelmans
The Snowy Day, Ezra Keats
Inch by Inch, Leo Lionni
Corduroy, Den Freeman
ABC Bunny, Wanda Gag





Books For Parents

Cole, Ann; Haas, Carolyn; Bushness, Faith; Weinberger, Betty. **I Saw a Purple Cow and 100 Other Recipes for Learning.** Boston: Little Brown and Co. 1972.

Cole, Ann; Haas, Carolyn; Heller, Elizabeth; Weinberger, Betty. **More Recipes for Fun.** Northfield, Ill. PAR project, 1970. Suggests a wide range of activities for children aged three to eleven.

Larrick, Nancy. **A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading.** New York: Bantam Books, Inc. 1975. How you can help, day in and day out.

Lorton, Mary Barratta. **Workjobs for Parents,** Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley Publishing Co. 1972, 1975. Practical ideas with materials you have at home.

Marzollo, Jean and Loyd, Janice. **Learning Through Play.** New York: Harper and Rowe, 1972. Includes many ideas for enhancing children's learning.

Scott, Ralph; Wagner, Guy; Cesinger, Joan. **Home Start Idea Book.** Darien, Conn.: Early Years Press, 1976. Another idea book for parents.

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. **Fun in the Making.** Washington: Office of Child Development, 1973. Crammed with ideas for children's playtime.

U.S. Office of Education, The National Urban Coalition, **Recipes For Reading.** Manual for parents to help children develop pre-reading skills.

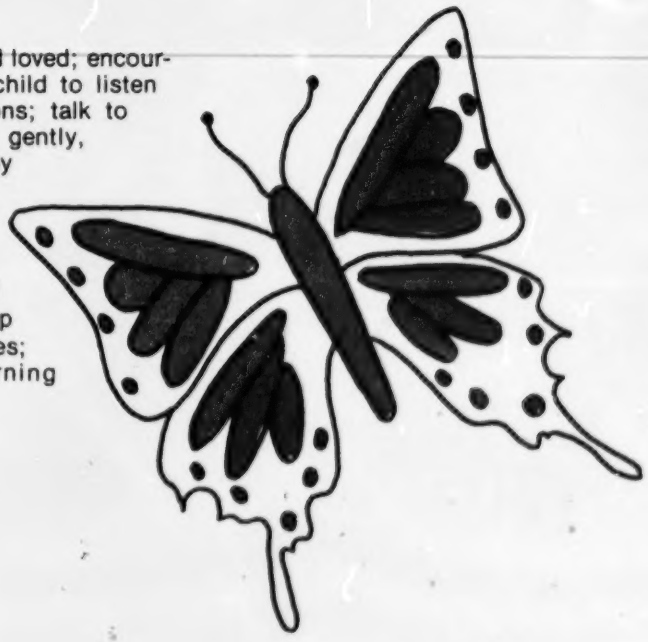
International Reading Assoc., 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Del. 1971: **What Books and Records Should I Get for My Preschooler?; What Is Reading Readiness?; How Can I Help My Child Get Ready to Read?; Why Read Aloud to Children?; Can I Help My Child Learn to Read English as a Second Language?**

Your Home Is Your Child's First School, Norma Rogers. Excellent brochure adapted from **How Can I Help My Child Get Ready to Read.**

Economic Press, Inc., Fairfield, New Jersey, **3 R's and a Big Hug**
Houghton Mifflin, Palo Alto, Ca. 94304, **Your Child and Reading.**

Summary

Help your child feel wanted and loved; encourage self-reliance; teach your child to listen attentively and follow directions; talk to your child from birth, softly, gently, and lovingly, but don't use baby talk; answer questions; teach an awareness of things; help the child develop self-expression, and give the child correct names for things; read to the child regularly; build up the background of experiences; take advantage of daily learning situations.



Talk with your children.
Play with them. Laugh with them.
Sing with them.
Learning is fun. Teaching is fun.
Enjoy being your child's first teacher!

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

If a child lives with criticism...
he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility...
he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule...
he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame...
he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance...
he learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement...
he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise...
he learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness...
he learns justice.
If a child lives with security...
he learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval...
he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship...
he learns to find love in the world.

Dorothy Law Nolte

THE CHOICE IS YOURS!